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APPLICATION NO.	FILING DATE	FIRST NAMED INVENTOR	ATTORNEY DOCKET NO.	CONFIRMATION NO.
10/015,723	10/30/2001	Rachel Kuller	10011658 -1	8864

7590 01/28/2003

HEWLETT-PACKARD COMPANY
Intellectual Property Administration
P.O. Box 272400
Fort Collins, CO 80527-2400

EXAMINER

FIGUEROA, FELIX O

ART UNIT

PAPER NUMBER

2833

DATE MAILED: 01/28/2003

Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

5

Office Action Summary

Application No.

10/015,723

Applicant(s)

KULLER ET AL.

Examiner

Felix O. Figueroa

Art Unit

2833

-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address --

Period for Reply

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE 3 MONTH(S) FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.

- Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136(a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- If the period for reply specified above is less than thirty (30) days, a reply within the statutory minimum of thirty (30) days will be considered timely.
- If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED (35 U.S.C. § 133).
- Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

Status

- 1) ☒ Responsive to communication(s) filed on 13 December 2002.
- 2a) ☐ This action is **FINAL**. 2b) ☒ This action is non-final.
- 3) ☐ Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11, 453 O.G. 213.

Disposition of Claims

- 4) ☒ Claim(s) 1-24 is/are pending in the application.
- 4a) Of the above claim(s) _____ is/are withdrawn from consideration.
- 5) ☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are allowed.
- 6) ☒ Claim(s) 1-24 is/are rejected.
- 7) ☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are objected to.
- 8) ☐ Claim(s) _____ are subject to restriction and/or election requirement.

Application Papers

- 9) ☐ The specification is objected to by the Examiner.
- 10) ☐ The drawing(s) filed on _____ is/are: a) ☐ accepted or b) ☐ objected to by the Examiner.
- Applicant may not request that any objection to the drawing(s) be held in abeyance. See 37 CFR 1.85(a).
- 11) ☐ The proposed drawing correction filed on _____ is: a) ☐ approved b) ☐ disapproved by the Examiner.
- If approved, corrected drawings are required in reply to this Office action.
- 12) ☐ The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner.

Priority under 35 U.S.C. §§ 119 and 120

- 13) ☐ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).
- a) ☐ All b) ☐ Some * c) ☐ None of:
1. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.
2. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. _____.
3. ☐ Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).
- * See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received.
- 14) ☐ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for domestic priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(e) (to a provisional application).
- a) ☐ The translation of the foreign language provisional application has been received.
- 15) ☐ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for domestic priority under 35 U.S.C. §§ 120 and/or 121.

Attachment(s)

- 1) ☒ Notice of References Cited (PTO-892)
- 2) ☐ Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948)
- 3) ☐ Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO-1449) Paper No(s) _____.
- 4) ☐ Interview Summary (PTO-413) Paper No(s). _____.
- 5) ☐ Notice of Informal Patent Application (PTO-152)
- 6) ☐ Other: _____.

DETAILED ACTION

Election/Restrictions

Applicant's election without traverse of Group I (claims 1-24) in Paper No. 3 is acknowledged.

Claim Objections

Claim 13 is objected to because of the following informalities: in claim 13 lines 3 and 4, the word --second-- should be inserted prior to "length" (both occurrences) and prior to "rigidity" in order to provide clarity to the claim. Appropriate correction is required.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 112

The following is a quotation of the second paragraph of 35 U.S.C. 112:

The specification shall conclude with one or more claims particularly pointing out and distinctly claiming the subject matter which the applicant regards as his invention.

Claims 13, 19 and 20 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 112, second paragraph, as being indefinite for failing to particularly point out and distinctly claim the subject matter which applicant regards as the invention.

In claim 13, it is unclear what is intended by the limitation "the rigidity of the length". It is noted that the claim discloses "a rigidity associated with the length." However, it is unclear how "a length" can have "a rigidity".

The scope of claims 19 and 20 is indefinite because there is an inconsistency within the claims. Claim 14, from which they depend, indicates that the subcombination, a coupling assembly, is being claimed. However, later claims 19 and 20 contain positive limitations directed toward an electronic device receptacle, suggesting that

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applicant intends to claim the combination of the coupling assembly and electronic device receptacle. Applicant is required to clarify what subject matter the claims are intended to be drawn to and the language of the claim must be amended to be consistent with this intent.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 102

The following is a quotation of the appropriate paragraphs of 35 U.S.C. 102 that form the basis for the rejections under this section made in this Office action:

A person shall be entitled to a patent unless –

(b) the invention was patented or described in a printed publication in this or a foreign country or in public use or on sale in this country, more than one year prior to the date of application for patent in the United States.

Claims 1-4, 7-10, 14, 15, 17-22 and 24 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) as being anticipated by Webster et al. (US 4,310,208).

Webster discloses a coupling assembly comprising: at least one signal carrying component (4); at least one steerable component (50), at least a portion of which is secured with the signal-carrying component. Webster also discloses an interface component (7); a non-secured portion of the steerable component having a first disposition (Fig.3) and a second disposition (Fig.1)

Regarding claims 2-4, 8, 15 and 21, Webster discloses the at least one signal carrying component comprising at least one electrical conductor / cable / one or more conductive traces / multiple signal carrying components.

Regarding claims 7, 9 and 10, Webster discloses the at least one steerable component comprising plastic; being flat; and having a width and coupled with the signal-carrying component along a majority of the width.

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Regarding claims 17, 18 and 22, Webster discloses the steerable component providing stiffness; manipulatable by a user; and the steerable component mounted to the interface component.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 103

The following is a quotation of 35 U.S.C. 103(a) which forms the basis for all obviousness rejections set forth in this Office action:

(a) A patent may not be obtained though the invention is not identically disclosed or described as set forth in section 102 of this title, if the differences between the subject matter sought to be patented and the prior art are such that the subject matter as a whole would have been obvious at the time the invention was made to a person having ordinary skill in the art to which said subject matter pertains. Patentability shall not be negated by the manner in which the invention was made.

Claims 5 and 16 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Webster in view of Bergamin (US 4,480,886).

Webster discloses substantially the claimed invention except for the flexible printed circuit. Bergamin shows that a flexible printed circuit is an art recognized equivalent structure for a flat cable. Therefore, because these two signal carrying components were art-recognized equivalents at the time the invention was made, one of ordinary skill in the art would have found it obvious to substitute of the component of Bergamin for the component of Webster to carry the electrical signal.

Claims 6, 11 and 23 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Webster.

Regarding claims 6 and 23, Webster discloses substantially the claimed invention except for the specific material of the steerable component. It would have been obvious to one having ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to use polyester as the preferred material, since it has been held to be within the

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general skill of a worker in the art to select a known material on the basis of its suitability for the intended use as a matter of obvious design choice. *In re Leshin*, 125 USPQ 416.

Regarding claim 11, Webster discloses substantially the claimed invention except for the specific width. However, it would have been an obvious to one having ordinary skill in the art to form the signal carrying component and the steerable component having equal width to maximize the retention surface between the components.

Claims 12 and 13 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Webster in view of Muldoon (US 2,030,115).

Webster discloses substantially the claimed invention except for the specific rigidities of the components. Muldoon teaches a coupling assembly in which the steerable component has a rigidity greater than the signal carrying component, thus providing a stronger and longer-lasting steerable component. Therefore, it would have been obvious to a person of ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to form the steerable component of Webster to be more rigid, as taught by Muldoon, to provide a stronger and longer-lasting steerable component.

Conclusion

The prior art made of record and not relied upon is considered pertinent to applicant's disclosure. Tengler et al. (US 4,722,692), Dickie (US 5,454,731) and Lee (US 6,319,049) disclose coupling assemblies with steerable components.

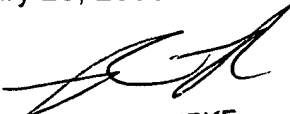
Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to Felix O. Figueroa whose telephone number is (703) 308-0097. The examiner can normally be reached on Mon.-Fri., 8:00-5:00.

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If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, Paula Bradley can be reached on (703) 308-2319. The fax phone numbers for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned are (703) 308-7722 for regular communications and (703) 308-7724 for After Final communications.

Any inquiry of a general nature or relating to the status of this application or proceeding should be directed to the receptionist whose telephone number is (703) 308-1782.

ffr
January 23, 2003



RENEE LUEBKE
PRIMARY EXAMINER